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Pfeifer et al.

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(54) **STACKABLE PALLET DISPLAY**

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This patent is subject to a terminal disclaimer.

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Related U.S. Application Data

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B65D 19/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC ***B65D 19/0012*** (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00019* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00034* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00054* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00069* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/0087* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00089* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/0097* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00104* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00228* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00243* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00268* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00273* (2013.01);
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(58) **Field of Classification Search**
CPC B65D 19/0012; B65D 2519/00019; B65D 2519/00054; B65D 2519/00089; B65D 2519/00223; B65D 2519/00228; B65D 2519/00243; B65D 2519/00278; B65D 2519/00373; B65D 2519/0087; B65D 2519/0097; B65D 5/06; B65D 5/0075; B65D 5/48028; B65D 5/48032; B65D 5/48034; B65D 5/48036; B65D 5/48044; B65D 5/48048
See application file for complete search history.

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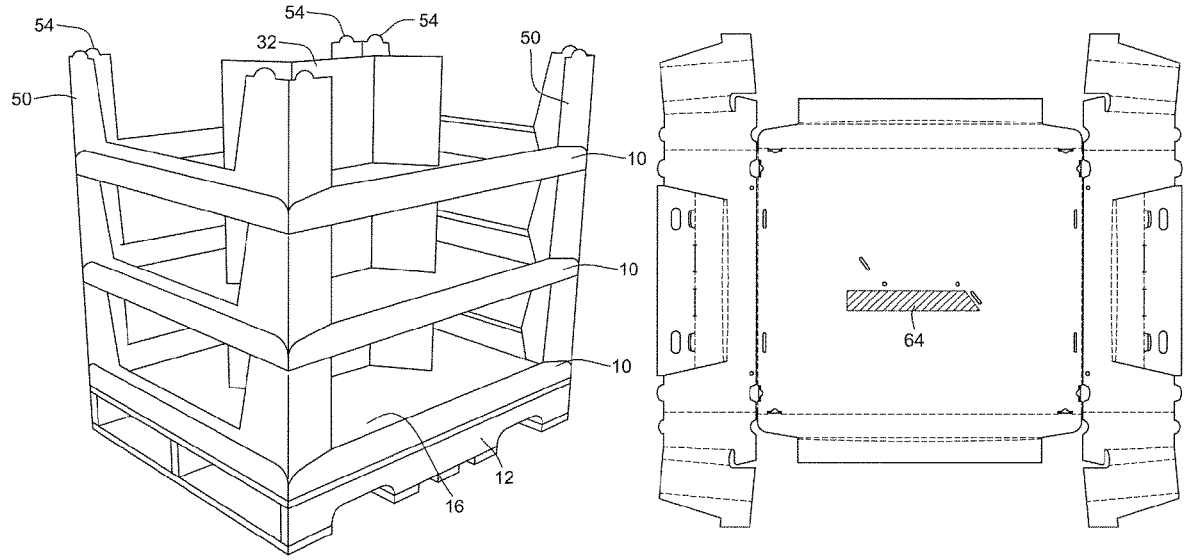
(57) **ABSTRACT**

A stackable pallet display system includes a tray portion having a rectangular bottom wall, corner posts extending upward from corners of the tray portion and an interior divider panel extending upward from the tray portion. The tray, corner posts and interior divider wall of the system can be folded from blanks of material.

20 Claims, 16 Drawing Sheets



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(52) **U.S. Cl.**
CPC *B65D 2519/00278* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00288* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00318* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00373* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00562* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00567* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00815* (2013.01); *B65D 2519/00965* (2013.01)

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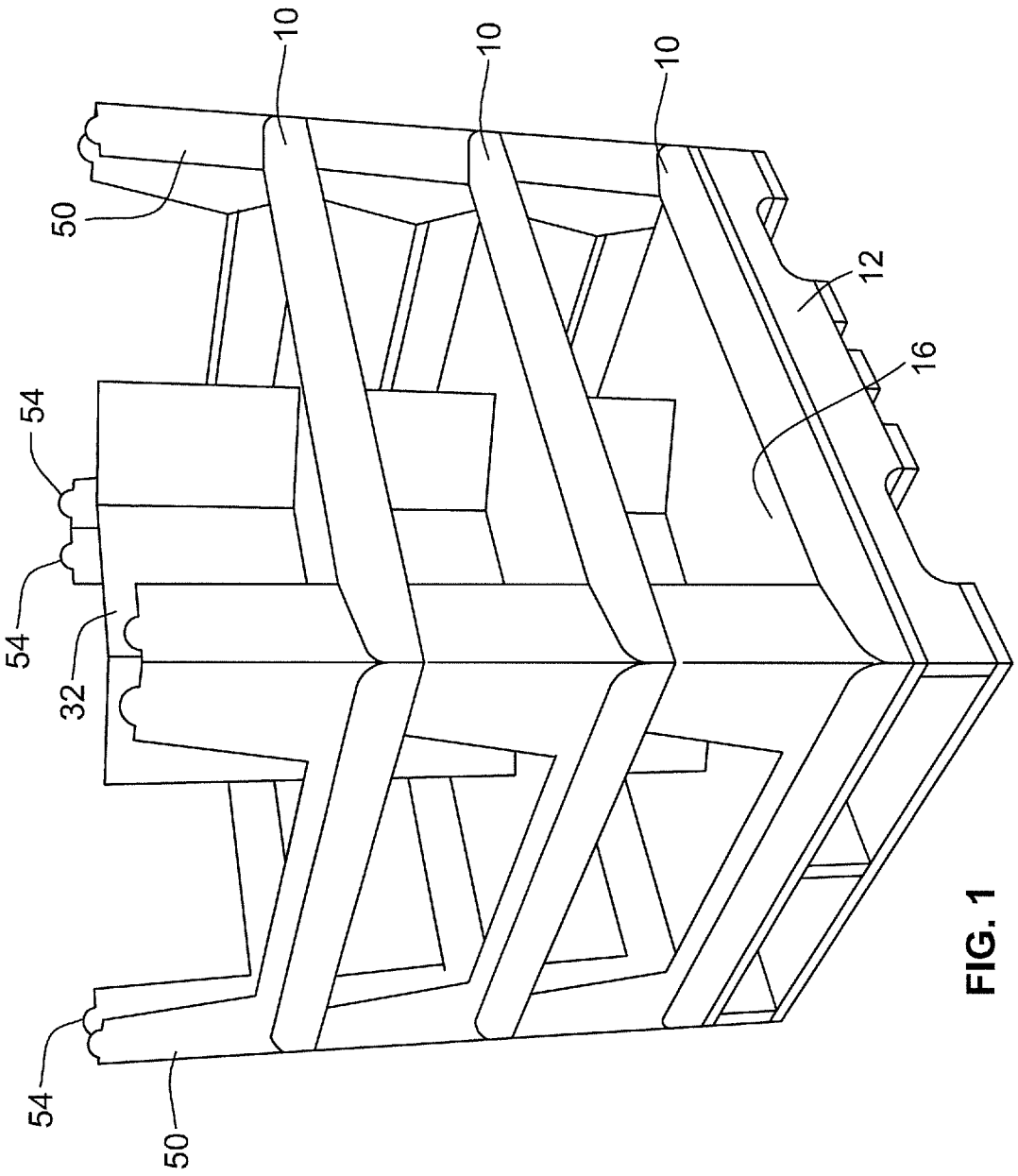

FIG. 1

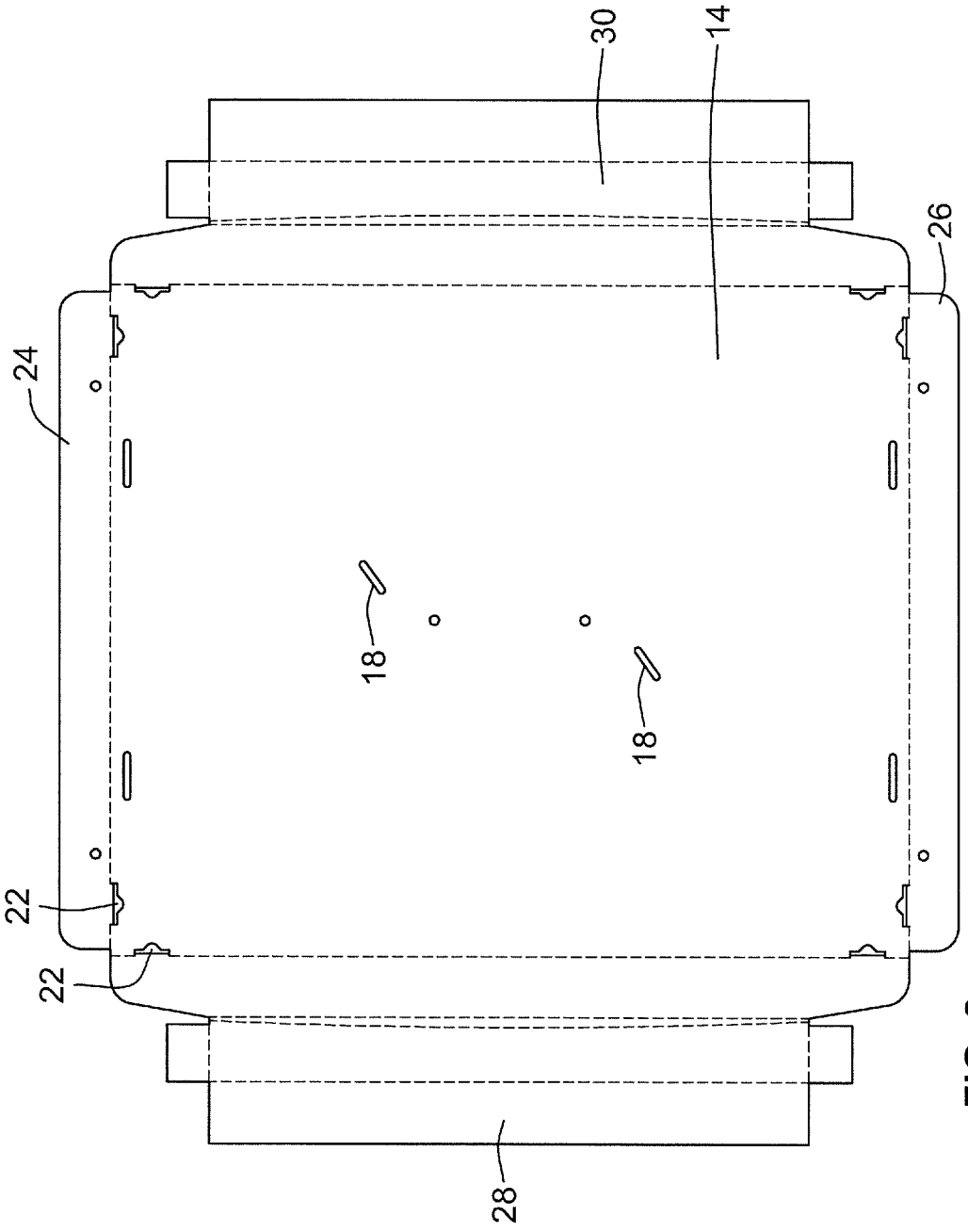

FIG. 2

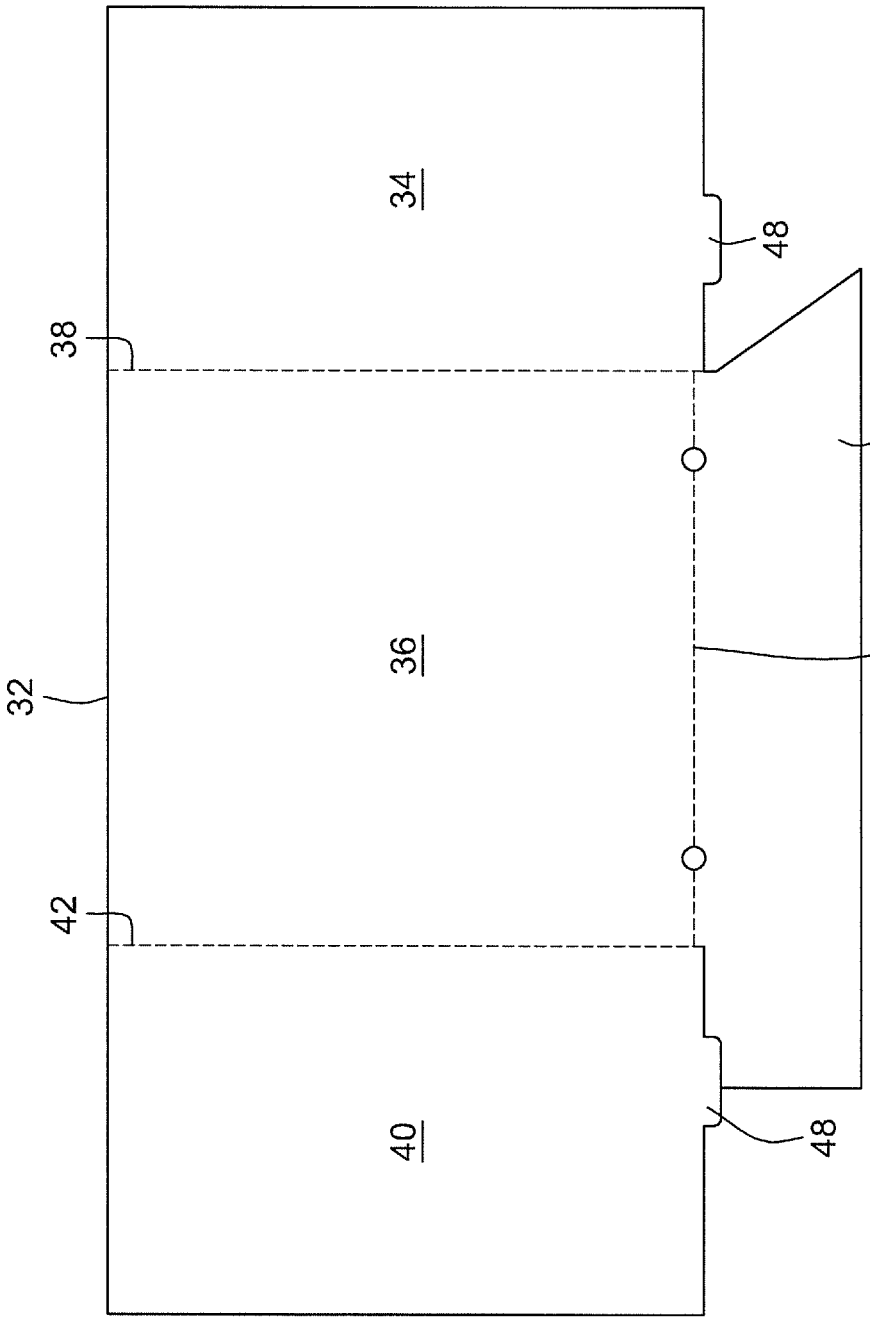

FIG. 3

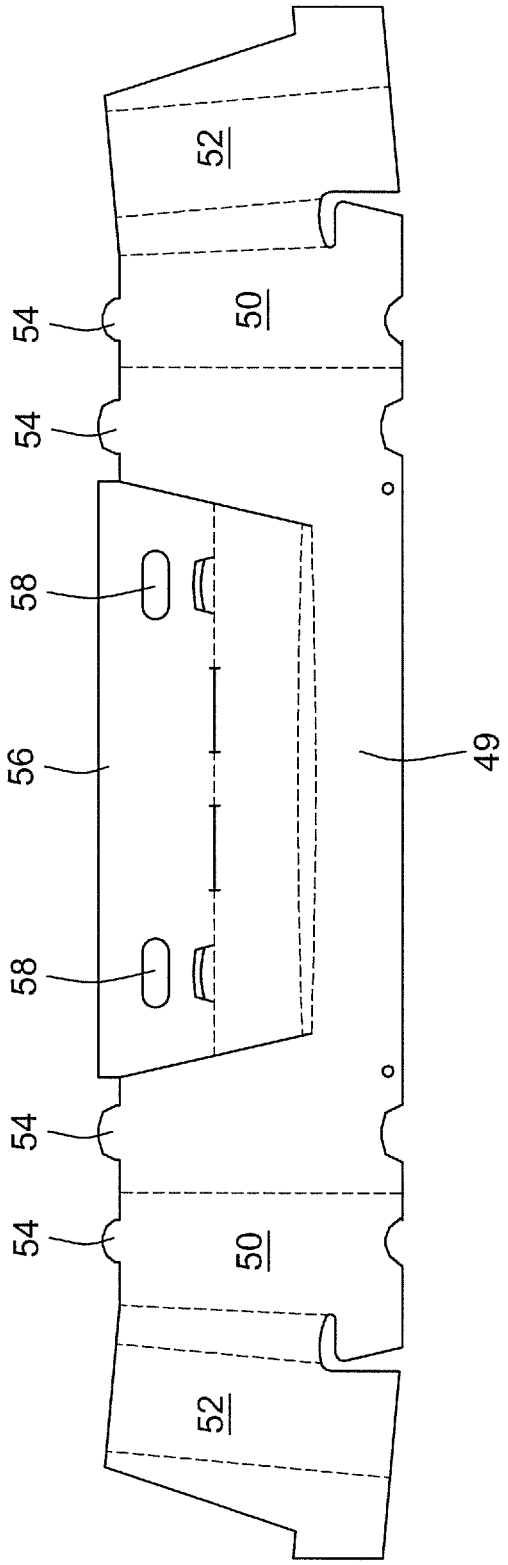

FIG. 4

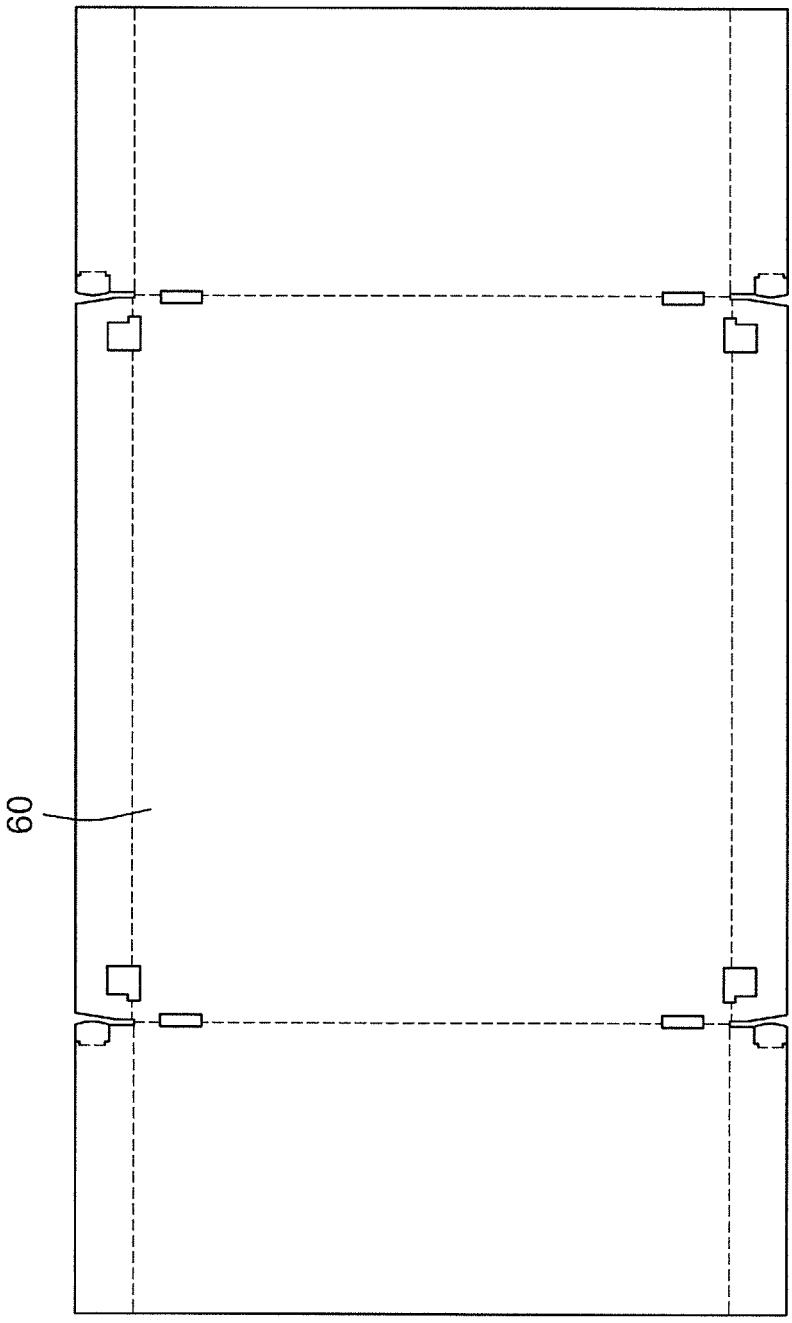

FIG. 5

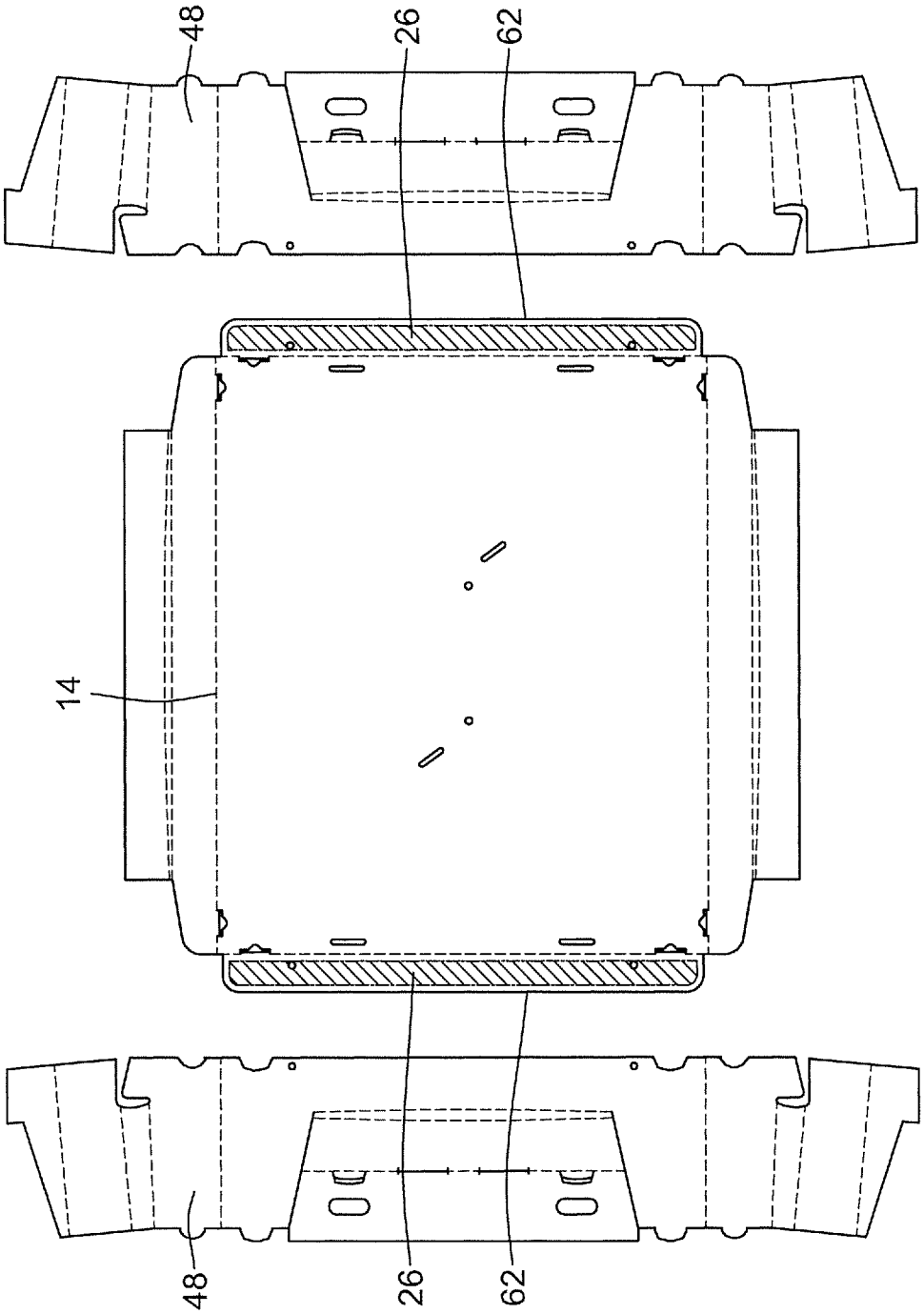

FIG. 6A

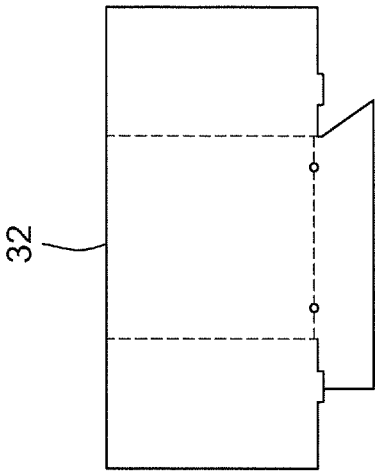

FIG. 6F

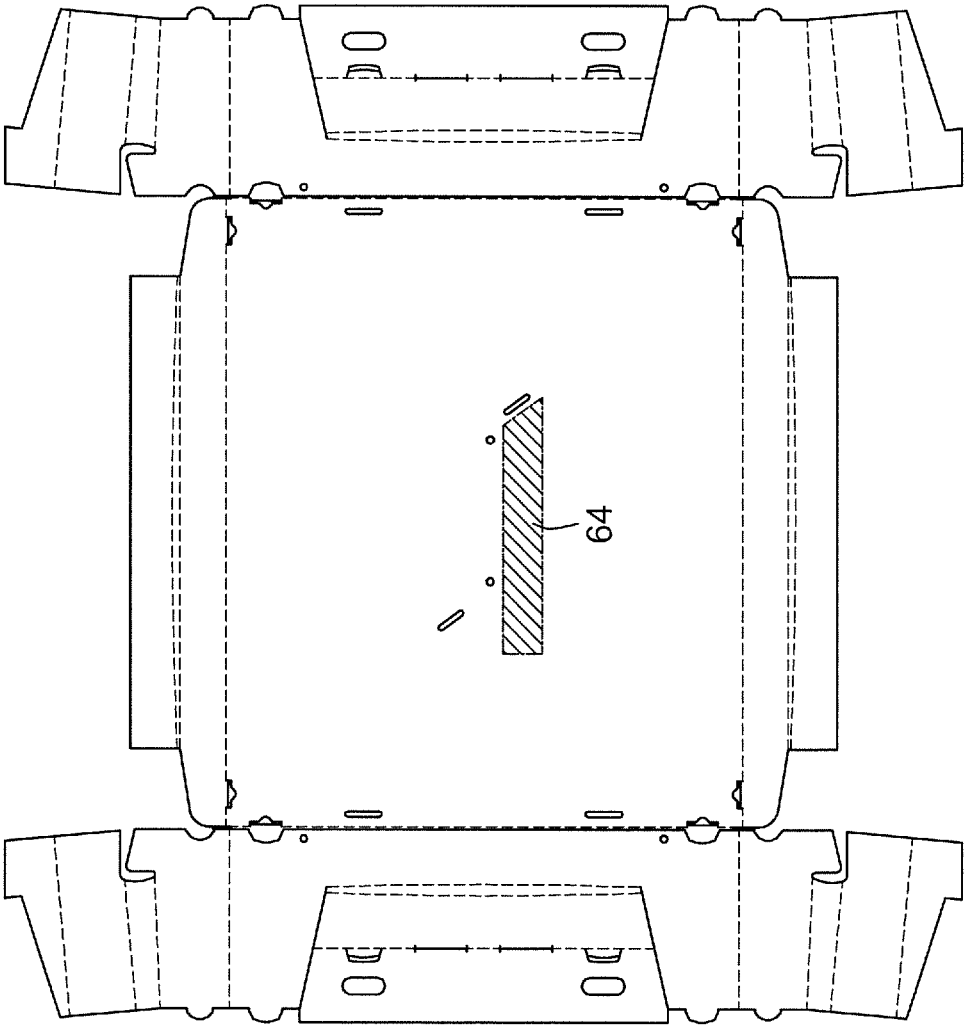

FIG. 6B

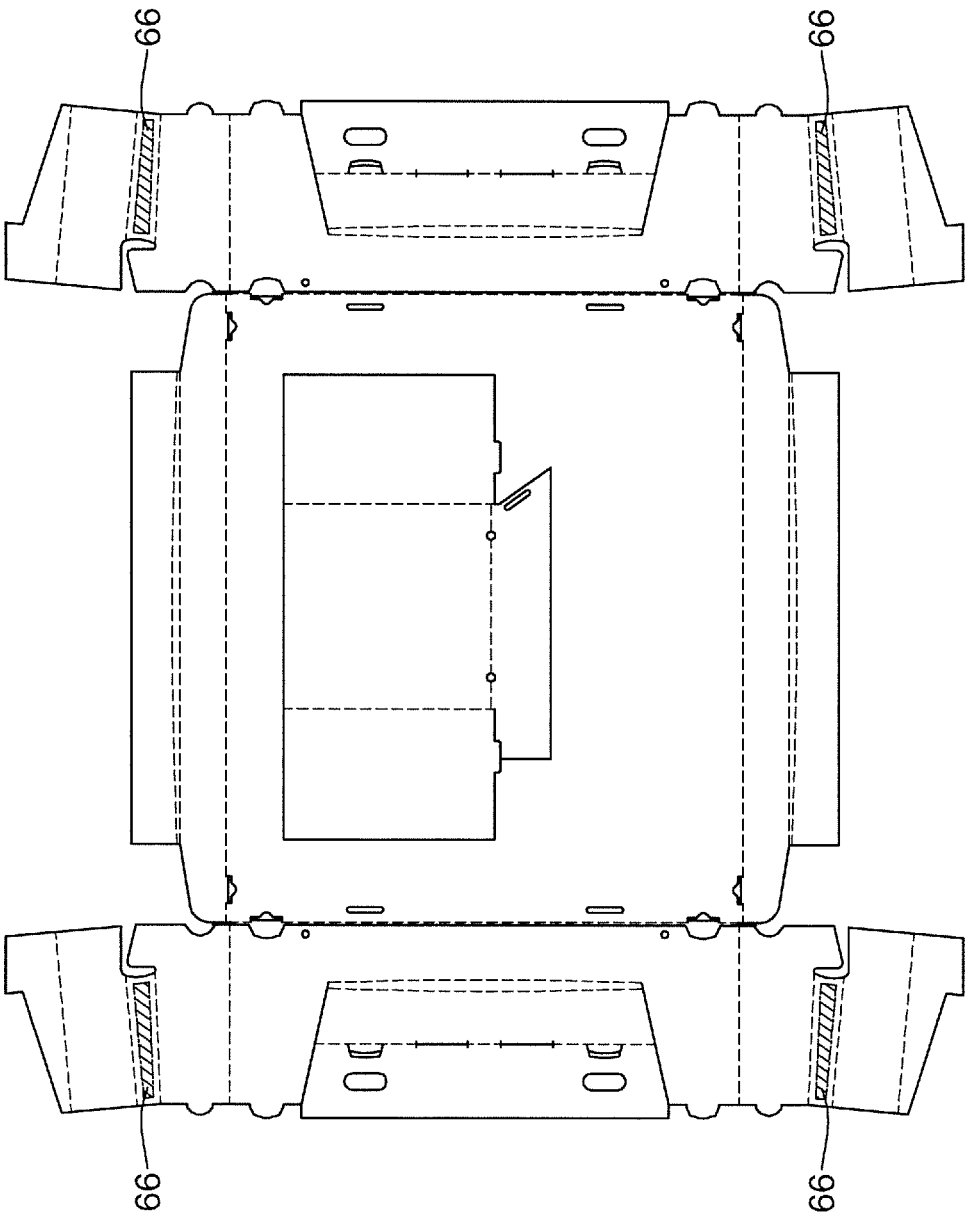

FIG. 6C

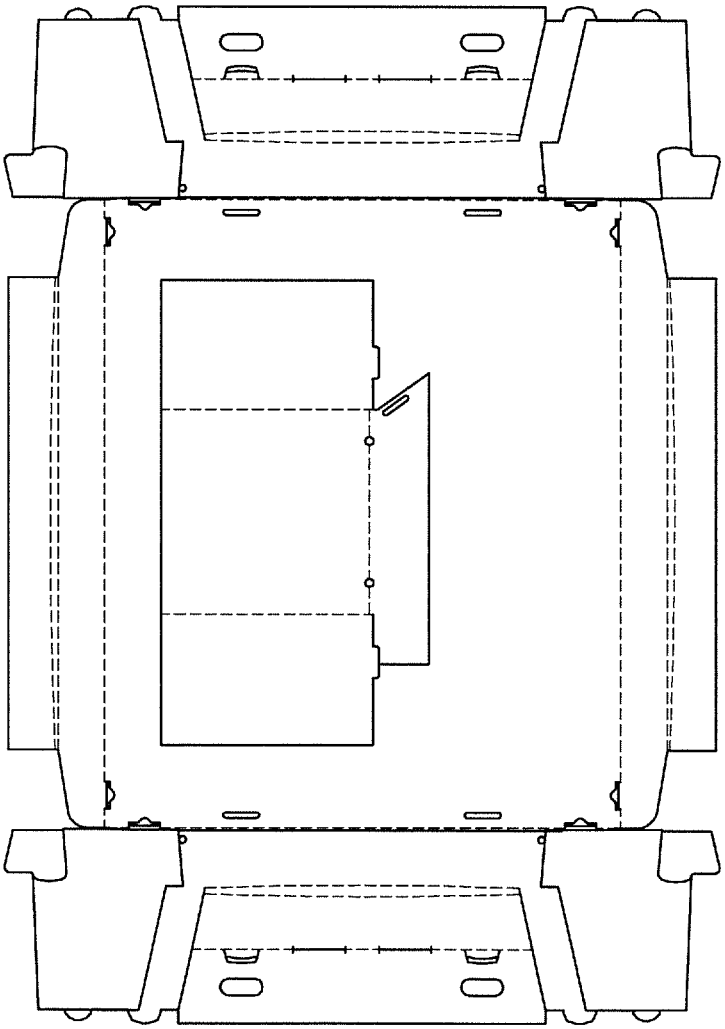

FIG. 6D

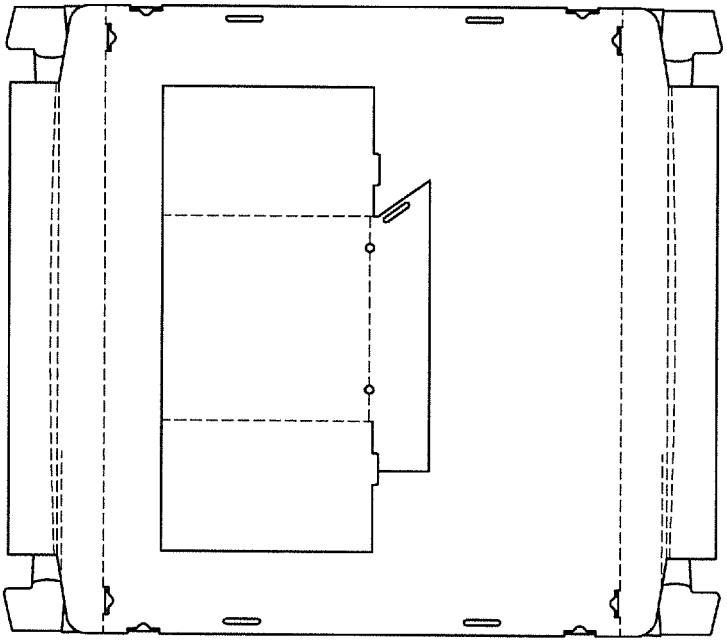

FIG. 6E

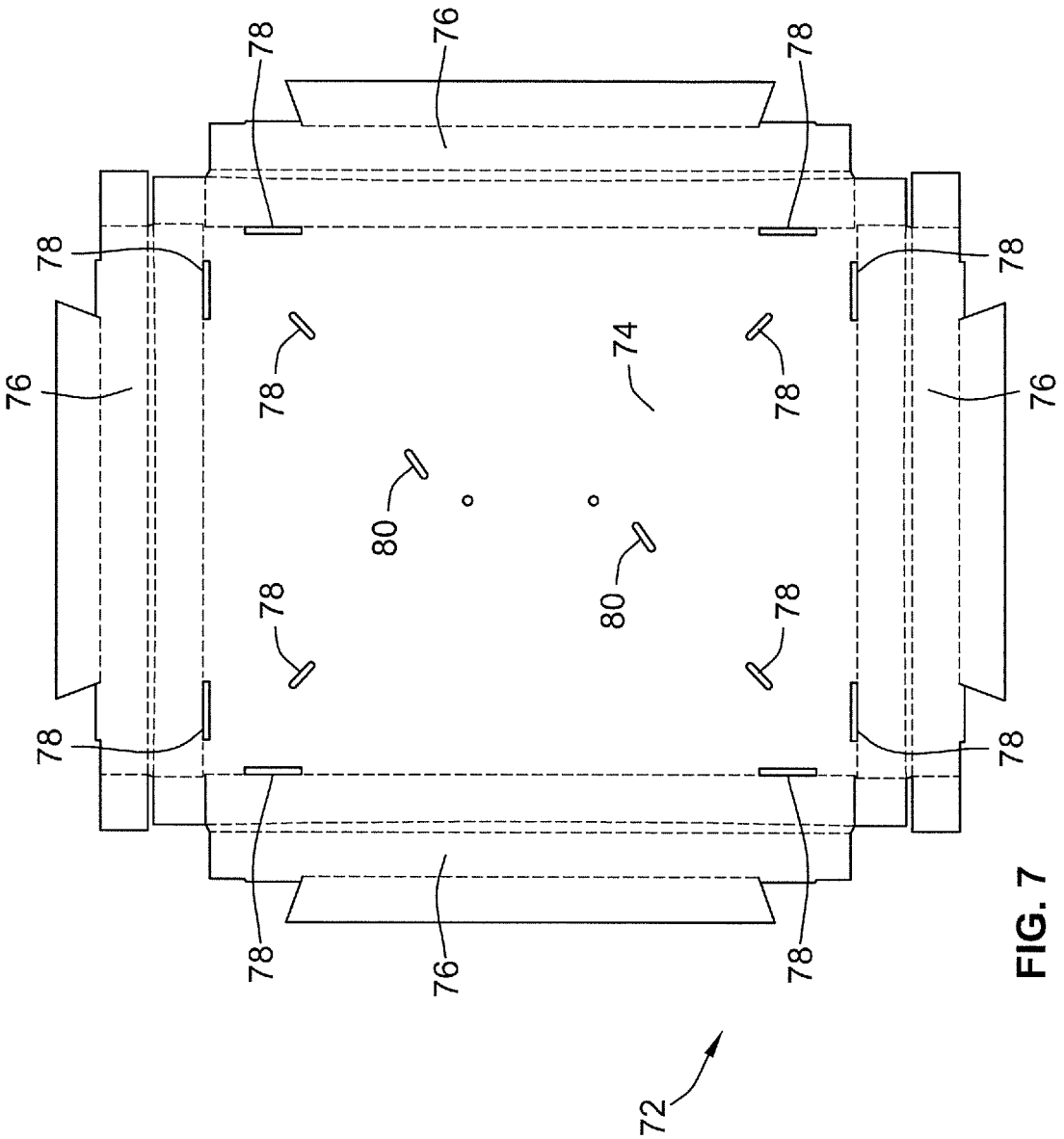

FIG. 7

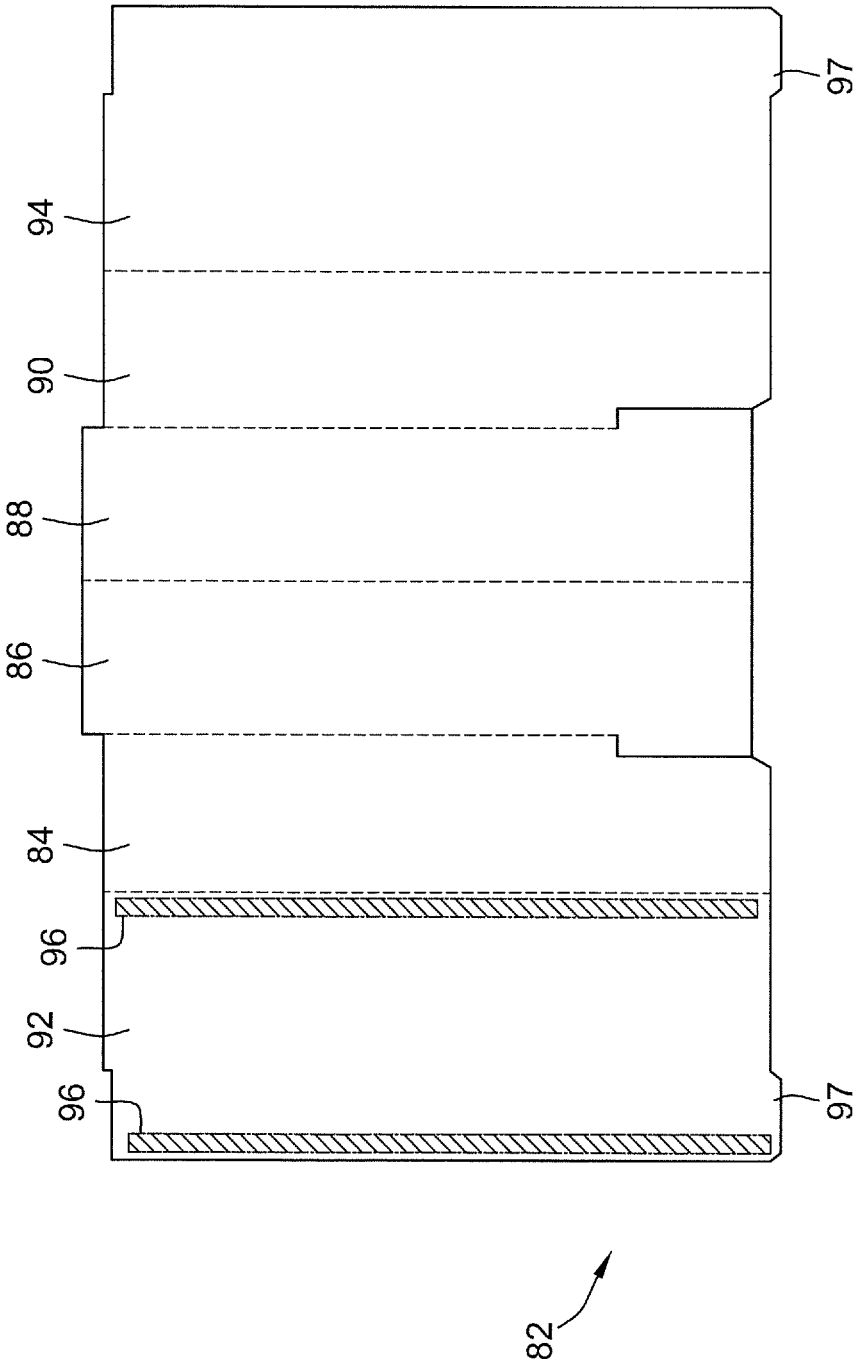

FIG. 8

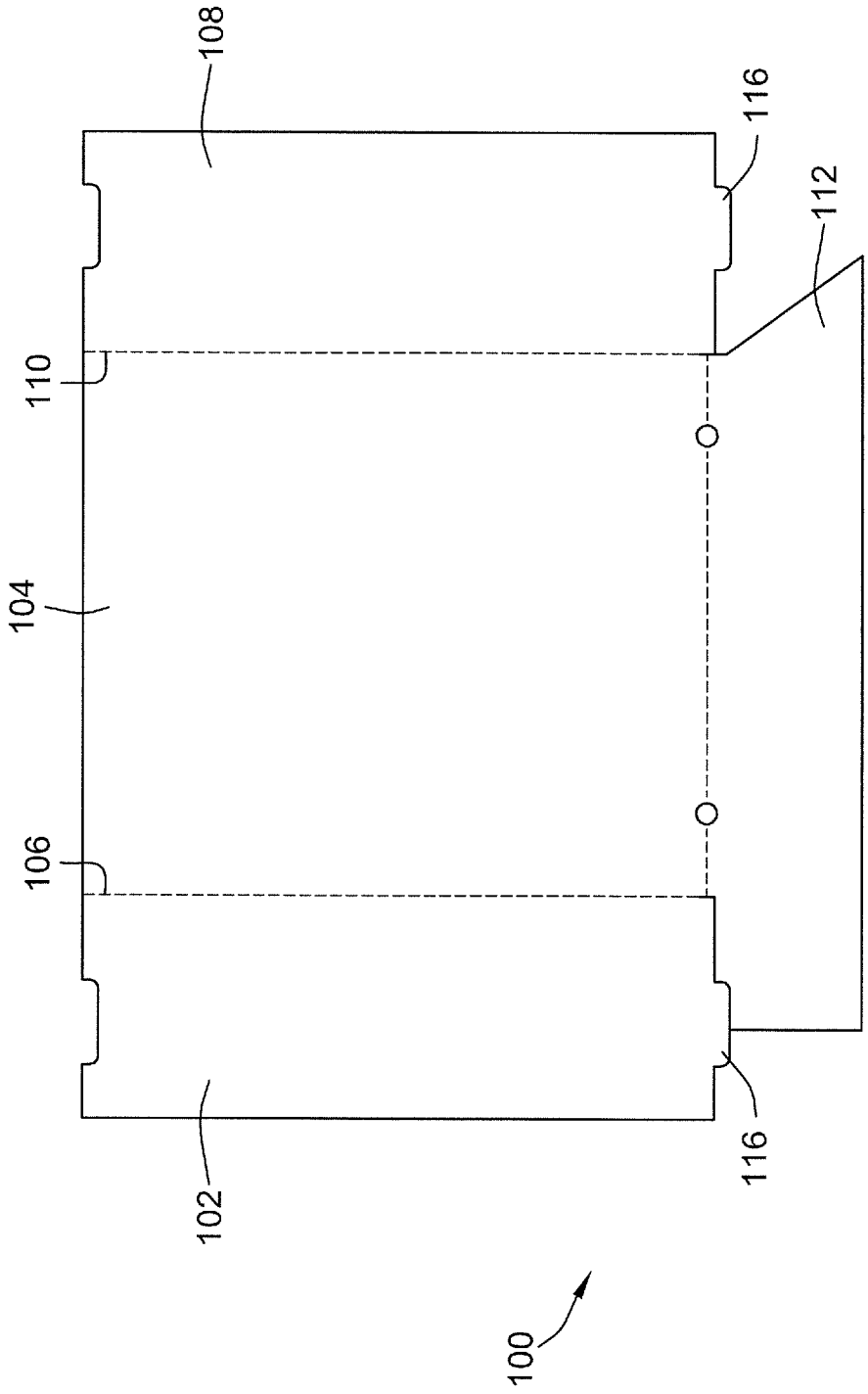

FIG. 9

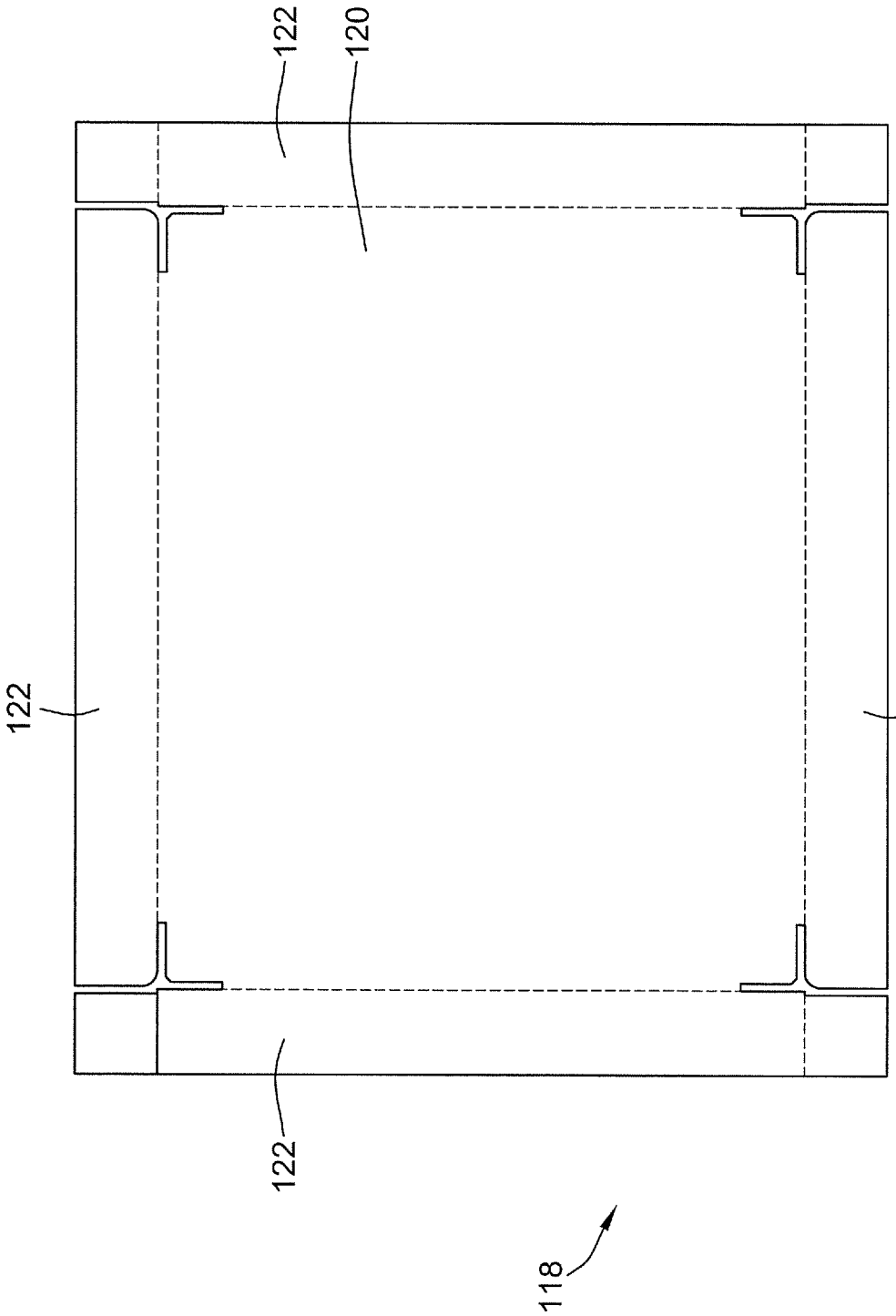

FIG. 10

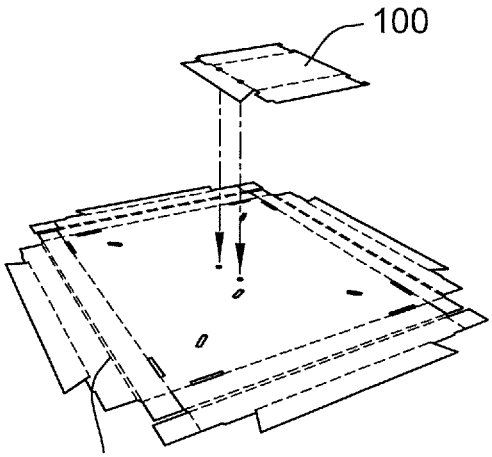

FIG. 11A

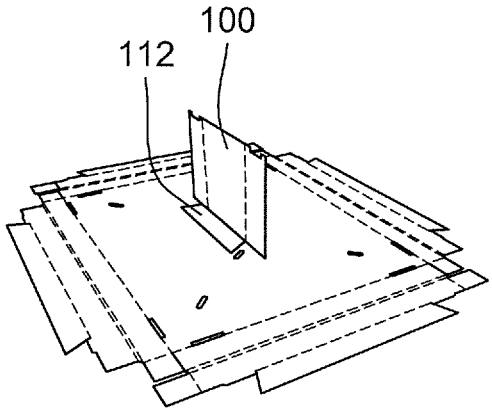

FIG. 11B

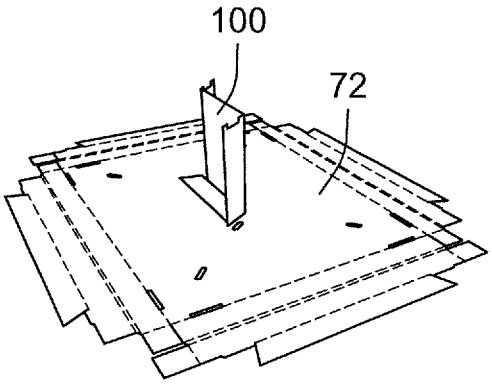

FIG. 11C

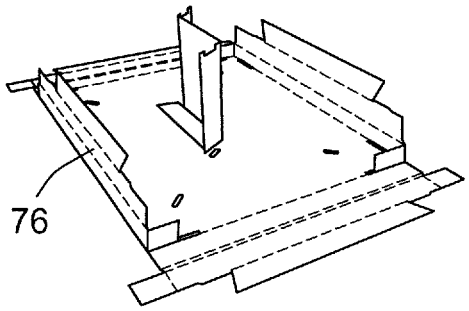

FIG. 11D

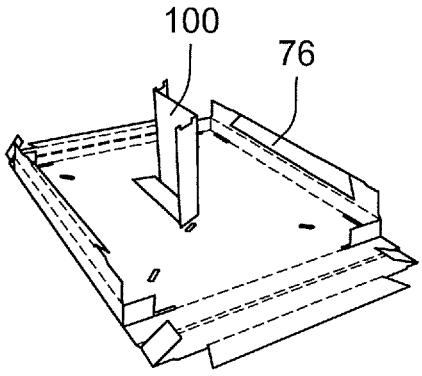

FIG. 11E

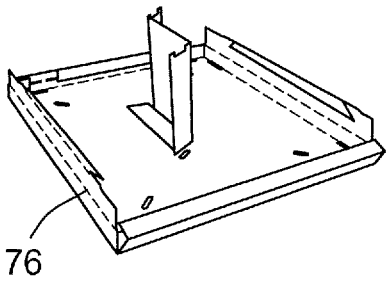

FIG. 11F

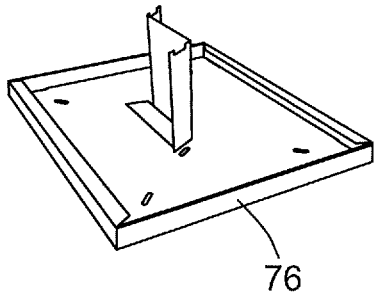

FIG. 11G

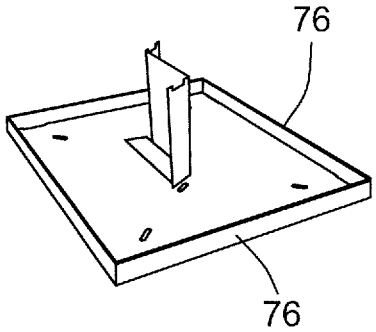

FIG. 11H

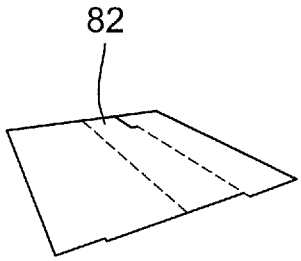

FIG. 11i

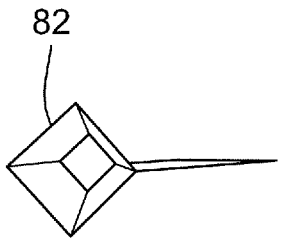

FIG. 11J

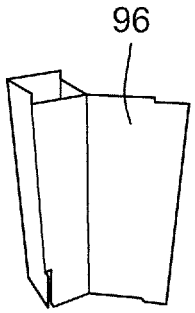

FIG. 11K

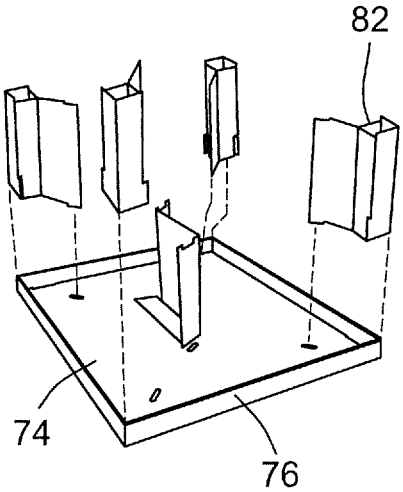

FIG. 11L

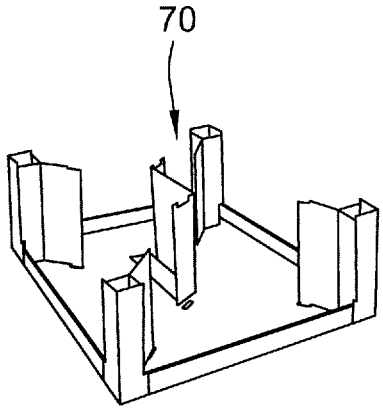

FIG. 11M

STACKABLE PALLET DISPLAY

CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS

The present invention is a continuation of U.S. patent application Ser. No. 15/061,239 filed Mar. 4, 2016, which claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Patent Application No. 62/182,710 filed Jun. 22, 2015, the contents of which are incorporated herein by reference.

FEDERALLY SPONSORED RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT

N/A

FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention generally relates to a foldable pallet display formed from paper, corrugated plastic or other similar material that is stackable on other like displays.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

The packaging industry is always striving to improve packaging that can be used for transportation as well as display. Such packaging solutions reduce time spent unpacking and repositioning goods.

The present system provides an improved display that can be stacked with other like displays.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

The present invention provides a stackable pallet system that can also function as a store display. The pallets in the system can be formed from paper or plastic blanks of material. The blanks are folded into components of the pallet. The pallet is configured to stack with another like pallet. In the present instance, another "like" pallet means one having at least the features needed to stack and interlock with another pallet of the present invention and does not require each pallet to be identical (although an identical pallet would also be considered a "like" pallet).

The pallets include a base or tray, four corner posts and a divider panel. To facilitate stacking of the pallets, the base is provided with slots configured to receive tabs extending upward from the corner post of a lower pallet.

In accordance with one embodiment, a stackable pallet comprises a tray portion having a generally rectangular bottom wall having a first corner, second corner, third corner and fourth corner. The tray includes a first end wall, an opposing second end wall, a first side wall and an opposing second side wall. Each of the end walls and side walls is connected via fold lines to the bottom wall. The bottom wall includes a first corner slot at the first corner and a first corner slot at the second corner. The bottom wall can also include a first corner slot at the third and fourth corners.

The pallet further includes a first corner post having a first upwardly extending tab positioned at the first corner of the tray portion. The first tab of the first corner post is aligned with the first corner slot at the first corner of the bottom wall of a like pallet. The pallet further includes a second corner post having a first upwardly extending tab positioned at the second corner of the tray portion. The first tab of the second corner post is aligned with the first corner slot at the second corner of the bottom wall of a like pallet. The pallet also includes a third corner post positioned at the third corner of the tray portion and a fourth corner post positioned at the fourth corner of the tray portion. The third and fourth corner posts can also include upwardly extending first tabs and the bottom wall can include corresponding slots. Moreover, one or more of the corner posts can be provided with a second (or more) tab. In this latter configuration, the bottom wall is provided corresponding slots.

The pallet further includes a divider panel extending upward from the bottom wall of the tray portion. This panel can be used to divide goods into separate regions on the pallet.

The first corner post can be connected to a first end of a first side panel and the second corner post is connected to a second end of the first side panel to form a single piece. The first side panel can be positioned at the first side wall of the tray portion. Similarly, the third corner post can be connected to a first end of a second side panel and the fourth corner post is connected to a second end of the second side panel. The second side panel is positioned at the second side wall of the tray portion.

The divider panel can include a central panel, a first outer panel connected to a first side of the central panel, and a second outer panel connected to a second side of the central panel. Additionally, the divider panel can include a glue panel connected to a bottom side of the central panel.

The bottom wall can include a first divider slot and a second divider slot. The first outer panel of the divider panel can then include a downwardly extending tab aligned with the first divider slot and the second outer panel can include a downwardly extending tab aligned with the second divider slot.

A foldable cap can be provided. The cap can be placed on the uppermost pallet of a stack of pallets.

The tray portion, corner posts and divider of the stackable pallet can be formed from paper or plastic sheets. The sheets can be corrugated.

In accordance with a second embodiment of the invention, a stackable pallet is provided which comprises a base having a bottom wall, a first foldable end wall connected to a first end of the base, a second foldable end wall connected to a second end of the base, a first foldable side wall connected to a first side of the base and a second foldable side wall connected to a second side of the base. The base further includes a first slot in the bottom wall proximate a first end of the first end wall and a second slot in the bottom wall proximate the first end of the first side wall. The pallet further includes a first corner post having a first portion extending upward from the first end wall and a second portion extending upward from the first side wall. The first portion includes an upwardly extending tab configured to fit in the first slot in the bottom wall of a like pallet and the second portion includes an upwardly extending tab configured to fit in the second slot in the bottom wall of the like pallet.

The stackable pallet can further include a divider panel extending upward from the bottom wall. The divider panel can include a central panel, a first outer panel and a second outer panel. Additionally, the central panel of the divider panel can also include a glue panel connected to a bottom of the central panel for securing the divider panel to the base. The bottom wall can include a first divider slot and a second divider slot and the first outer panel can include a downwardly extending tab positioned in the first divider slot and the second outer panel can include a downwardly extending tab positioned in the second divider slot.

The first portion of the first corner post can include a first outer layer of material and a second inner layer of material.

Similarly, the second portion of the first corner post includes a first outer layer of material and a second inner layer of material.

In accordance with a third embodiment of the invention, a display pallet is provided. The display pallet comprises a tray having a generally rectangular bottom wall, a first side wall, a second side wall, a first end wall and a second end wall. The end and side walls can be integrally connected to the bottom wall. The bottom wall includes a first divider slot. The pallet further includes a first corner post extending upward from a first corner of the bottom wall, a second corner post extending upward from a second corner of the bottom wall, a third corner post extending upward from a third corner of the bottom wall and a fourth corner post extending upward from a fourth corner of the bottom wall. A first divider extends upward from the bottom wall in the center of the bottom wall. The first divider includes a first downwardly extending tab positioned in the first divider slot in the bottom wall.

The first corner post (and the other corner posts) can be configured to have a plurality of outer walls forming a hollow interior. The outer walls of the first corner post can have a generally rectangular cross-sectional configuration, or other suitable shape.

The first corner post (again, and the other corner posts) can also include a flange extending toward an interior of the tray. The bottom wall can include a corner post slot and the flange can include a downwardly extending tab positioned in the corner post slot.

Further aspects of the invention are disclosed in the Figures, and are described herein.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

To understand the present invention, it will now be described by way of example, with reference to the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. **1** is a perspective view of a stack of pallet displays in accordance with an embodiment of the present invention;

FIG. **2** is a plan view of a blank for a tray bottom component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **1** of the present invention;

FIG. **3** is a plan view of a blank for a central support and divider panel component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **1** of the present invention;

FIG. **4** is a plan view of a blank for a side panel and corner post component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **1** of the present invention;

FIG. **5** is a plan view of a blank for a cap component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **1** of the present invention;

FIGS. **6**A-F is a set of views illustrating glue areas for the components of the pallet display of the present invention;

FIG. **7** is a plan view of a blank for a tray bottom component of another embodiment of the pallet display of the present invention;

FIG. **8** is a plan view of a blank of a corner support component in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **7** of the present invention;

FIG. **9** is a plan view of a blank for a central support and divider panel component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **7** of the present invention;

FIG. **10** is a plan view of a blank for a cap component of the pallet display in accordance with the embodiment of FIG. **7** of the present invention; and,

FIGS. **11**A-**11**M are perspective views illustrating steps for forming the pallet display from the components of FIGS. **7**-**10**.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

While this invention is susceptible of embodiments in many different forms, there is shown in the drawings, and will herein be described in detail preferred embodiments of the invention with the understanding that the present disclosure is to be considered as an exemplification of the principles of the invention and is not intended to limit the broad aspect of the invention to the embodiments illustrated.

In accordance with a first embodiment, the present invention is directed to a stackable pallet **10** formed from a paper or plastic material, such as a paper or plastic corrugated material. One or more of the pallets **10** can be placed in a store or other retail establishment and be used as a display for the goods carried on the pallets **10**.

The pallet **10** is configured to stack with other like pallets **10** as shown in FIG. **1**. The stack of pallets **10** is shown on a conventional wood pallet **12**. The wood pallet **12** can be engaged by a fork lift for moving the stack of pallets **10** (and any goods on the pallets **10**). A conventional plastic pallet, or other suitable transport mechanism, can also be used to transport the stack of pallets **10**.

The pallet **10** is formed from several components. The components are formed from blanks of material (such as those shown in FIGS. **2**-**6**). The blanks are folded and glued together to form a pallet display.

FIG. **2** shows a blank of material that can be folded to form a base or tray **14** of the pallet **10**. The blank **14** includes a centrally located, rectangular bottom wall **16**. The bottom wall **16** includes a first slot **18** and a second slot **20** in the interior portion of the bottom wall **16** for use with a divider component as discussed herein.

The bottom wall **16** also includes first and second slots **22** proximate each corner of the bottom wall **16**. The corner slots **22** are used to receive upwardly extending tabs from a corner post of a lower pallet **10** when stacked on the lower pallet **10**.

The tray **14** includes a first foldable side wall **24** and an opposing second foldable side wall **26**. The tray **14** also includes a first foldable end wall **28** and an opposing second foldable end wall **30**.

FIG. **3** shows a blank for a divider component **32** of the pallet **10**. The divider **32** includes a first panel **34**, a second, center panel **36** connected on one side to the first panel **34** by a fold line **38**, and a third panel **40** connected to the second panel **36** on an opposing side of the second panel **36** by a fold line **42**.

The second panel **36** is connected at its bottom edge to a glue panel **44** by fold line **46** (which is perpendicular to fold lines **38** and **42**). The glue panel **44** is used to connect the divider **32** to the bottom wall **16** of the base **14**. Additionally, each of the first and third panels **34**, **40** of the divider **32** includes a lower tab **48** that can be inserted into the first and second slots **18** and **20** of the bottom wall **16**.

FIG. **4** shows a blank of material that can be formed into a side panel **49**. The side panel **49** also includes first and second corner posts **50** integrally formed with the side panel **49**. A first side panel **49** can be folded and connected to the first side wall **24**, and a second side panel **49** can be folded and connected to the second side wall **26** of the base **14** to provide four corner posts **50** as shown in FIG. **1**. Alternatively, the side panels **49** can be connected to the end walls **28**, **30**.

Referring to FIG. **4**, each corner post **50** includes a support panel **52** that is folded into an interior of the pallet **10**. The support panel **52** makes each post **50** two layers of material.

Each post **50** includes a first and second tab **54** extending upward. The tabs **54** are positioned to enter the corner slots **22** of a base **14** of a pallet **10** stacked on top of the posts **50**. In this manner, the stacked pallets **10** are securely positioned on each other and will not slide.

The side panel **49** also includes a central panel **56** having handle slots **58**. This central panel **56** is folded inside along the bottom wall **16** of the tray bottom **14** during assembly of the pallet **10**.

FIG. **5** shows a blank for forming a cap **60**. The cap **60** can be placed on a single pallet **10** or the topmost pallet **10** of a stack of pallets **10**.

FIGS. **6**A-F show glue areas for setting up the pallet **10** from the blanks. As shown at the top of FIG. **6**A, the base **14** is provided with a first and second glue strip **62** along an interior side of the first and second side walls **24**, **26**. These glue strips **62** are used to connect the side panels **49** to the base **14**.

The base **14** also includes a central glue strip **64** for connecting the glue panel **44** of the divider **32** to the base **14**. Finally, at least one of the panels in the corner posts **54** includes a glue strip **66**.

Another embodiment of the invention is illustrated in FIGS. **7**-**11**(*m*). FIGS. **7**-**10** show blanks for forming components of a pallet display **70** and FIGS. **11**(*a*)-**11**(*m*) show steps for forming the display **70** from the components. The completed pallet or pallet display **70** is shown in FIG. **11**(*m*).

FIG. **7** provides a blank for forming a base or tray component **72** for the pallet **70**. The blank **72** includes a generally rectangular, central bottom wall or support surface **74**. On each side of the bottom wall **74** is a plurality of panels that fold into end walls and side walls **76** that extend upward from the edges of the bottom wall **74** (see also e.g., FIG. **11**(*m*)).

The bottom wall **74** includes three slots **78** proximate each corner for securing a corner post to the tray (described below). Additionally, the bottom wall **74** also includes two slots **80** for securing a divider to the middle of the tray (described below).

A blank for a corner post **82** is shown in FIG. **8** (see also e.g., FIGS. **11**(*i*)-**11**(*m*)). The corner post blank **82** includes four inner panels **84**, **86**, **88**, **90**, and a first outer panel **92** and a second outer panel **94**. The first outer panel **92** is provided with glue strips **96** (denoted by a plurality of "x"s).

To form the corner post **82**, the blank is folded in half so that the glue strips **96** of the first outer panel **92** contact the second outer panel **94**. The inner panels **84**, **86**, **88** and **90** are positioned to have a generally square, hollow cross-sectional shape (see FIG. **11**(*j*)), with the glued outer panels **92**, **94** forming a flange or wing **98** extending therefrom. Each of the first and second outer panels **92**, **94** includes a lower extending portion **97** that forms a tab for the flange **98**. The corner post **82** is positioned so that the flange extends toward a center of the bottom wall **74** with the tab **97** fitting into one of the slots **78**.

The corner posts **82** of FIG. **8** do not include upwardly extending tabs. However, such tabs can be included and operate in the manner described above with respect to the embodiment of FIGS. **1**-**6**.

FIG. **9** shows a blank for a divider component **100** of the pallet **10**. The divider **100** includes a first panel **102**, a second, center panel **104** connected on one side to the first panel **102** by a fold line **106**, and a third panel **108** connected to the second panel **104** on an opposing side of the second panel **104** by a fold line **110**.

The second panel **104** is connected at its bottom edge to a glue panel **112** by fold line **114** (which is perpendicular to fold lines **106** and **110**). The glue panel **112** is used to connect the divider **32** to the bottom wall **16** of the base **14**. Additionally, each of the first and third panels **102**, **108** of the divider **100** includes a lower tab **116** that can be inserted into the two slots **80** provided for the divider **100** in the bottom wall **74**.

FIG. **10** shows a blank for forming a cap **118**. The cap **118** can be placed on a single pallet display **70** or the topmost pallet **70** of a stack of pallets **70**. The cap **118** includes a central panel **120** and a plurality of lips or short side walls **122** that can be folded perpendicular to the central panel **120**.

Except for the top cap **118**, FIGS. **11**(*a*)-**11**(*m*) provide step by step instructions for forming the pallet display **70** from the tray, corner post and divider components **72**, **82** and **100**, respectively. As shown in FIGS. **11**(*a*)-**11**(*c*), the glue panel **112** of the divider **100** is glued to the bottom wall **74** of the tray **72**, and the first and third panels **102**, **110** are maneuvered until the tabs **116** are inserted into the slots **80**.

As shown in FIGS. **11**(*d*)-**11**(*h*), the panels forming the end walls and side walls **76** are then folded into proper position extending upward around a perimeter of the bottom wall **74** (this can be done before adding the divider **100** if desired). Following the folding of the end walls and side walls **76**, the corner posts **82** are formed (as described above), and then positioned in place at each of the corners of the tray **70** as shown in FIGS. **11**(*i*)-**11**(*m*).

Many modifications and variations of the present invention are possible in light of the above teachings. It is, therefore, to be understood within the scope of the appended claims the invention may be protected otherwise than as specifically described.

We claim:

1. A stackable tray comprising:

a tray having a rectangular bottom wall, a first side wall extending upward from a first side of the bottom wall, a second side wall extending upward from a second side of the bottom wall, a first end wall extending upward from a first end of the bottom wall and a second end wall extending upward from a second end of the bottom wall, the bottom wall including a first centrally located slot;

a divider extending upward from the bottom wall spaced from the first and second side walls and first and second end walls of the tray, the divider having a first panel, a second panel connected on a first side to the first panel by a fold line and a third panel connected to a second side of the second panel by a fold line, the divider including a glue panel connected to a bottom edge of the first panel of the divider by a fold line wherein the fold line connecting the glue panel to the first panel of the divider is perpendicular to the fold line connecting the second panel to the first panel, the second panel of the divider further including a first tab configured to be inserted in the first centrally located slot in the bottom wall, wherein the divider is connected to the bottom wall of the tray by the glue panel and the first tab.

2. The stackable tray of claim **1** wherein the bottom wall further includes a second centrally located slot.

3. The stackable tray of claim **2** wherein the third panel of the divider includes a second tab configured to be inserted in the second centrally located slot of the bottom wall.

4. The stackable tray of claim 3 wherein the first panel of the divider is angled toward the first side wall and the third panel of the divider is angled toward the second side wall.

5. The stackable tray of claim 4 wherein the second panel is parallel to the third panel.

6. The stackable tray of claim 1 wherein the glue panel is glued to an upper surface of the bottom wall.

7. The stackable tray of claim 6 wherein the bottom wall includes a glue strip on the upper surface for gluing the glue panel to the bottom wall.

8. The stackable tray of claim 1 wherein the glue panel has a width greater than a width of the first panel of the divider.

9. The stackable tray of claim 8 wherein the first panel of the divider is parallel to the first side wall and the second side wall.

10. The stackable tray of claim 1 further comprising a first corner post that extends upward from a first corner of the tray and a second corner post that extends upward from a second corner of the tray, the first and second corner posts having a height greater than a height of the first and second side walls and first and second end walls.

11. The stackable tray of claim 10 wherein the first corner post and the second corner post are formed from a single blank of material having a side wall panel between the first corner post and the second corner post.

12. The stackable tray of claim 11 further comprising a third corner post that extends upward from a third corner of the tray and a fourth corner post that extends upward from a fourth corner of the tray, the third and fourth corner posts having a height greater than the height of the first and second side walls and first and second end walls.

13. The stackable tray of claim 12 wherein the third corner post and the fourth corner post are formed from a single blank of material having a side wall panel between the third corner post and the fourth corner post.

14. The stackable tray of claim 10 wherein the first corner post includes a first tab extending upward from a top edge of the first post.

15. The stackable tray of claim 14 wherein the bottom wall includes a first corner slot in the first corner configured to receive a tab from a corner post of a like tray stacked below the bottom wall.

16. A stackable tray comprising:

a tray having a rectangular bottom wall, a first side wall extending upward from a first side of the bottom wall, a second side wall extending upward from a second side of the bottom wall, a first end wall extending upward from a first end of the bottom wall and a second end wall extending upward from a second end of the bottom wall, the bottom wall having a first corner slot at a first corner;

a first corner post extending upward from the first corner of the bottom wall at a height greater than a height of the first and second side walls and first and second end walls, the first corner post including a first tab extending upwardly from a top portion of the first corner post and a second tab extending upwardly from the top portion of the first corner post, wherein the first tab is perpendicular to the second tab, the bottom tray including a first slot in the first corner and a second slot in the first corner for receiving a first tab and a second tab of a first corner post of a like tray when stacked thereon; and,

a divider having a first vertical panel parallel to the first side wall, a second vertical panel at an angle with respect to the first side wall and the first end wall connected to one side of the first vertical panel, and a third vertical panel at an angle with respect to the second side wall and the second end wall connected to a second side of the first vertical panel extending upward from the bottom wall spaced from the first and second side walls and the first and second end walls of the tray, the divider including a horizontal glue panel connected to a bottom edge of the first vertical panel.

17. The stackable tray of claim 16 further comprising a second corner post extending upward from a second corner of the bottom wall a height greater than the height of the first and second side walls and first and second end walls, the second corner post including a first tab extending upwardly from a top portion of the second corner post and a second tab extending upwardly from the top portion of the second corner post, wherein the first tab is perpendicular to the second tab, the bottom tray including a first slot in the second corner and a second slot in the second corner for receiving a first tab and a second tab of a second corner post of the like tray when stacked thereon.

18. The stackable tray of claim 17 wherein the first corner post is connected to the second corner post by a side wall.

19. The stackable tray of claim 16 wherein the divider is positioned at a central portion of the bottom wall.

20. The stackable tray of claim 19 wherein the glue panel has a width greater than a width of the first vertical panel of the divider.

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